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June 11, 2003

## **MONKEYPOX UPDATE AND ALERT**

The current outbreak of monkeypox, which is occurring among individuals who have handled exotic pets in the United States, is felt to pose little danger to the general population. To date there are 50 cases reported in the Midwest and Northeast (Illinois, Wisconsin, Indiana, New Jersey, and Florida), with no evidence of spread between humans. As part of Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) response to the monkeypox outbreak, CDC is recommending smallpox vaccination because it provides protection against monkeypox. Smallpox vaccination is being recommended for the following individuals in the 5 affected states:

1. Health care workers taking care of human cases of monkeypox;
2. Persons who have investigated and are investigating human cases of monkeypox or affected animals;
3. Close contacts to the case, or close contacts likely to have had exposure to respiratory secretions or contaminated materials (such as blankets, and clothing)
4. Persons physically exposed to sick prairie dogs since April 15th in the affected areas.

There have been no reports of any cases of monkeypox in California at this time. However, in the event that there are persons in the above categories who visited an affected area and are now in Los Angeles, efforts to vaccinate these individuals will be coordinated by the Los Angeles County Department of Health Services. Although there are good indications that the smallpox vaccine is effective for monkeypox, such vaccinations will be given under an investigational new drug protocol, using a special consent form provided by CDC. CDC indicates at this time that the only contraindication for vaccinating the above individuals is presence of an immunocompromising condition.

Additionally, through a joint order of the CDC and the Food and Drug Administration, the Department of Health and Human Services has issued a notice of embargo and prohibition on transportation or offering for transportation in interstate commerce or sale, certain rodents and prairie dogs.

We will provide additional information as it becomes available. General information about the outbreak is available on CDC's web site [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov). Information specific to Los Angeles may be seen at [www.lapublichealth.org/acd](http://www.lapublichealth.org/acd). If you require additional information regarding this outbreak, call Acute Communicable Disease Control Program at (213) 240-7941, or regarding the smallpox vaccine call at the Immunization Program, (213) 351-7800.

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